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George Augustus Spiller #9  
Virg<sup>a</sup>  
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Geo. S. Spiller  
Hove. Street, No. 303  
Mrs Larkins

G. Aug. S. Virg

1797  
James Buchanan  
1797  
James Buchanan

An  
Inaugural Dissertation  
on Hepatitis  
By  
of Virginia



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A Disposition &c.

Hepatitis or inflammation of the liver, from the vital importance of the organ & particularly from the violence of its attack and the frequent occurrence of it in the United States, and more particularly in the Southern States, is very justly considered one of the most distressing diseases, to which the human system is liable. Having resided for several years in a part of the country, where climate is peculiarly favourable to the production of this complaint, it has frequently occurred, within the sphere of our own observation, and having been once or twice the subject of it ourselves, it excited a spirit of enquiry and has from our earliest pursuits in medicine gained much of our time and attention. Although with us this disease has been a subject of long and strict investigation, and occupies our attention, yet we are well aware of our inability to offer any thing original or interesting on it, it having heretofore been ably treated of by all practical writers, having how ever been it in all its stages, and traced by observation, the

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correcting of their statement, we have chosen it as a subject for our inaugural Dissertation—

### Description of Hepatitis

In the following observations, we shall attempt to give a correct description of the causes, Symptoms, and method of cure of the different forms of inflammation of the Liver—

Hepatitis, has generally, been divided into two kinds the one acute the other chronic—

#### Symptoms of Acute Hepatitis

This complaint, makes, its attack more or less suddenly, usually coming on with a sense of fullness, succeeded by high fever, and pain in the right side, sometimes pungent, and sometimes obtuse, which extends generally to the shoulder or clavicle of the side affected, but often to the opposite side, and is much increased when pressure is made upon the part, and to which the patient often applies, his hand seeking for relief.

These symptoms are attended, with cough, difficulty of

*[Faint, illegible handwriting in a cursive script, likely a historical document or letter.]*

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of breathing and an inability of lying except on the side affected. At this time, there is considerable fever, the pulse is strong, hard, frequent, and intermitting, but sometimes is somewhat feeble and oppressed. We have remarked that in the latter description of pulse, the intermitting and hacking cough were more frequent and distressing than in the former and the coughs seem to be caused by the intermitting pulse. When the pulse intermits, there appears to be, a temporary congestion of blood in the lungs, which produces some irritation and consequently the cough. At the time we were affected with this complaint, we frequently placed our finger on the radial artery, for the purpose of observing whether the intermitting pulse and cough were concomitant and we found that the former symptom invariably produced or was instantaneously produced by the latter together with some anxiety and oppression about the precordia. The skin is hot and dry, the tongue covered with a white or yellowish fur, and it is said, that, "we hear the disease then

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occurs in a red color, the color is not brown  
being of a deep yellow color, though this disease fre-  
quently occurs without any other symptoms.

In addition to these symptoms there sometimes  
occurs a and perhaps also, a swelling of the bowels  
matter; the color of the urine is dark and the urine  
is a deepening of color, sometimes it is at least of  
any intermixture, not with them. (The Practice)

The color matter is found in the appearance  
of the blood, just before it is regulated, the red part  
falling to the bottom and the buffy coat not being  
yet formed appears of green color.

Novatores have generally made a distinction be-  
tween the symptoms that occur when the inflamma-  
tion occupies the ~~inner~~ surface of the liver and  
those that are attendant when the disease affects the  
soreness. Chiliasmatis Hepatis int. Libi that the  
acute Hepatitis is always an inflammation of the inner  
membrane of the liver and that the paratyphoid  
is the chronic kind, the acute disease may be  
Cited.



ported either in the senses or in the exercise of volun-  
 ity in the brain. In the former case a more pungent pain  
 and shock may be produced and the impression  
 is more considerably affected. In the latter there  
 occurs less pain and a vomiting is produced commonly  
 by some inflammation communicated to the stomach.

These notions, that are destined to give rise to  
 influence by the practitioners, are therefore affected, but  
 Thomas after enumerating these signs & symptoms  
 exist by other cordly diseases. It is in fact a disease  
 during a practice many years with no success (John  
 Hepatitis is admitted by many of the same) as  
 well as a disease. He has proved me to say  
 that the symptoms which have just been pointed  
 out, are so unequivocal as has been represented  
 by most of the writers.

### Causes of acute Hepatitis

Hepatitis is more apt to occur in warm  
 than in cold or temperate climates.

The commonest cause is the use of spirituous liquors.

Chronic hepatitis

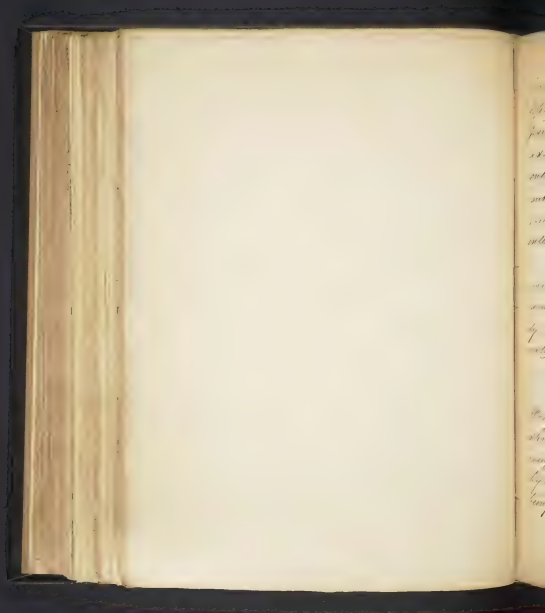


inflammation of other parts of the system, as colds  
 & internal suppurative confluxions, and fluxes. It is likewise  
 produced by the excessive warmth of the cutaneous  
 system by long continued submittence to fevers by  
 hot abstractions in the liver by high living and  
 by a free subsistence in the use of wines and stupe-  
 facious liquors. This latter causes a very common  
 source of the disease in the Southern States. Persons  
 who live in the March Mountains and the districts of Virginia  
 and who are considerably fond of wine in the use of  
 spirituous liquors are very often affected by this  
 disease —

Symptoms in chronic Hepatitis

The symptoms in chronic inflammation of the liver  
 are frequently very obscure so much so, indeed, that  
 the disease sometimes exists so silent as to go unnoticed  
 on the account of never known to be present until  
 discovered by dissection after death.

This form of Hepatitis is attended with a bad  
 complexion, a yellowish hue to the face, a yellowish





pain in the stomach, indigestion, vomiting, flatulency, & belching, and they obtain relief. There is a dull pain in the area affected, extending to the shoulder, & some of the patients suffering of the liver sometimes enlargement and hardness of this organ. The patient is melancholy, and fears of relapse, & in some cases of chronic hepatitis, the patient is vacillating between intermits.

The Causes that produce chronic inflammation of the liver are mostly such as excite the acute form, & they are frequent. The disease frequently proceeds to a cure and the acute stage is terminated in a chronic inflammation of this organ.

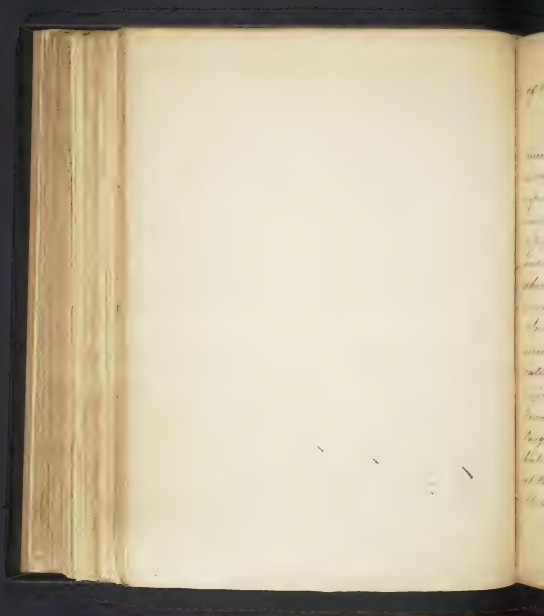
Diagnostic Signs of Hepatitis

"We may readily distinguish it from other chronic inflammation by the pain in the upper extending into the shoulder by the swelling of the circumference, by the weight being increased, & more weight is retained, & by the loss of weight & appetite. The heat was increased being increased upon touching any thing into the stomach.



is unable to relax, who even laughs and  
 merrily are secured into it without the immediate  
 rejection of them under the top protrusion of strength  
 is distinguished from gas troica. Hepatitis may  
 be distinguished from Spasmodic the gall ducts by  
 there being no maces by the pain being permanent  
 by the pulse being in tension and it consists in a moderate  
 and by the patient preserving always the body  
 in a straight quiescent posture, whereas the greatest  
 ease is had there is Spasmodic on the gall ducts, is ob-  
 tained by bending the body forwards in the sleep, the  
 (Spasmodic)

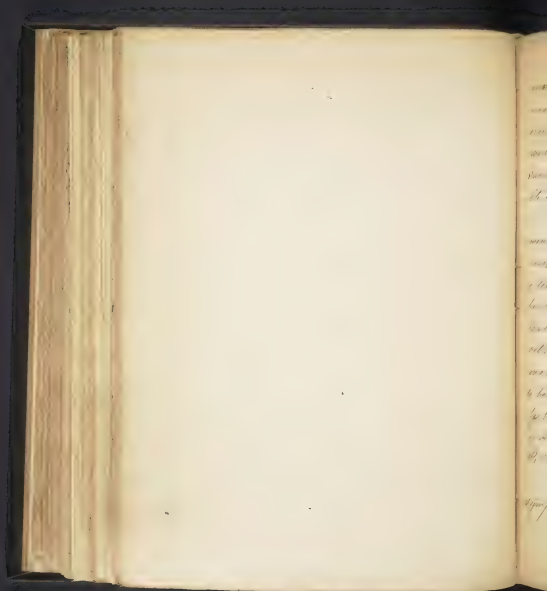
Hepatitis may terminate like other infla-  
 mations either by resolution, suppuration or gan-  
 grene but most frequently by resolution. Erysipelas  
 is sometimes in the same terminations, as suppuration and  
 the course of it gangrene is very rare - the suppurative  
 is analogous to the one ~~at~~ the other if the same ter-  
 minations may be known by the same characteris-  
 tic symptoms that distinguish the preceding description.



of infirmities, generally.

Treatment of Acute Hepatitis[illegible]

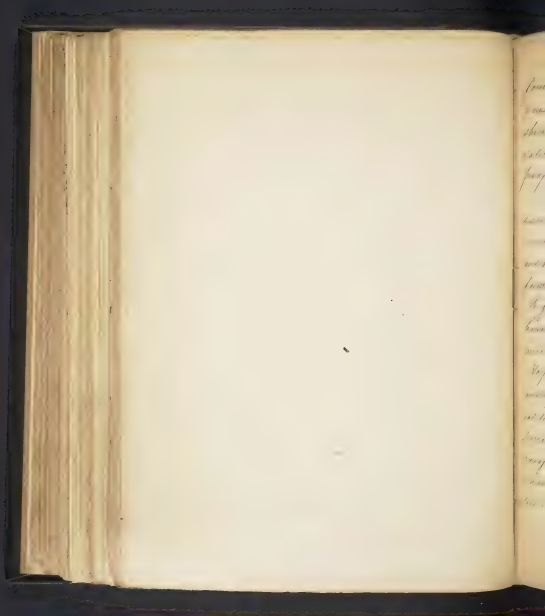
In addition to general instructions not given to have  
recourse to local bleeding as a local anæsthetic  
operation, it best must be carefully shown in the  
region of the sinus. After the operation, with a view  
removal of debris & to be sufficiently softened, a  
large blister should be placed on the right side  
but a remark made by Dr. J. J. in substance  
at this time strictly attention to "Bleeding" in  
phlegm is a source of the highest order of action late  
(in



in some degree returned by an increase in the quantity  
 moving. The only complaint in such cases they hardly  
 ever feel, generally to increase circulation and immediate  
 marked excitement. If one blood is not sufficient a  
 second one of these must be employed which has prefer-  
 able to history, open the first by continuing to give you

The strength of such, depending the nature of the disease you  
 are should be strictly observed, and more especially in  
 cases in which the symptoms increase in so many  
 a termination is suppuration. The blood should  
 be kept perfectly open by the use of purgatives, as  
 calomel and Scrup. the Venous salt and Croton  
 oil. Stimulations applied to the part predominate  
 and sometimes the general warm bath are found  
 to be excellent auxiliaries. If the blood is already  
 kept up by the use of stimulating doses of tartaric  
 acid, or any in which may be added nitrate or  
 P. ash.

If after the reduction of the vital inflammation  
 symptoms the disease still proves refractory and is  
 found









says, "an inflammation of the iris when it adheres to the pectiniform which was generally the case, and a tumour appeared externally, it was removed by operation with success." The third goes on to describe a case in which the practice proved successful.

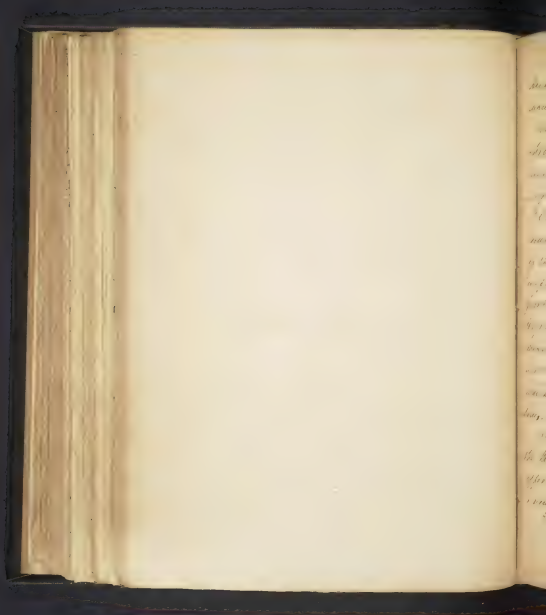
### Treatment in Chronic H. inter.

In chronic H. inter. treatment is obvious. If possible, we can do what our chief reliance should be placed on. The use of mercury seems to be a safe and certain method of treatment. "In a large number of cases," says the author, "the use of mercury is not only found to be successful, but the system generally improves, and the eyes are relieved, not in order to moderate pain and reduce inflammation, but with occasionally some we shall have to resort to some measures to generalise and to bleed." (Chapman's Therapeutics)

There is a large number of the lower eye, and in a very gradual, which must be gradually kept from becoming and the only method of treatment is to





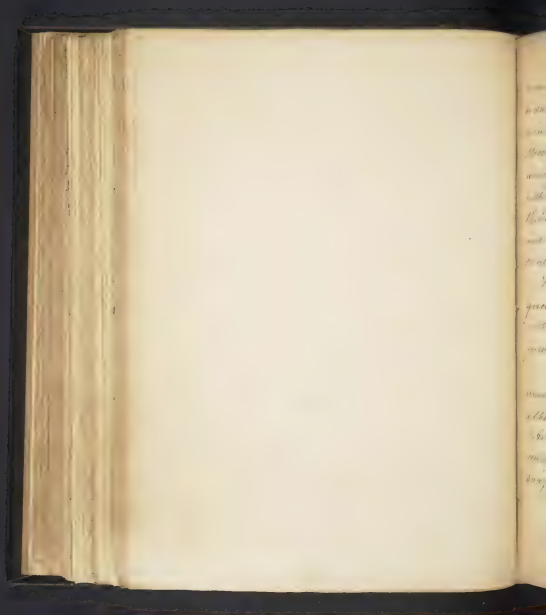


kind of really interesting relief is seen the disease  
would greatly rise in its efforts, and the relief

is a direct result of the nature of the disease in its  
chronic affection of the liver. If the nature and  
treatment is known. Hypertension the makes the follow-  
ing result, and as we think is not unreasonable.

As the Hypertension has been known since it is in  
scale, but it may be a disorder and may, perhaps  
in the nature of both. The position of the disease  
is a far more serious one, and is more often a direct  
partial or temporary, but in the same disease, such  
Hypertension, and going on to the condition of a  
more severe form, and in the same way, the  
and is a direct result, and it is the state of the liver  
which gives rise to a variety of circumstances, and  
may.

Various other affections of the liver, and the  
the liver disease, and applied to the liver in the most  
effective and most rapidly. A few hours or even  
a single hour will sometimes, even relieve, but it  
is





is necessary to continue the remedy, till the system  
be sufficiently affected by it and to repeat it  
occasionally till the patient has recovered his usual degree of  
strength. This is a rule in affections of the liver of the  
utmost importance. A state of weakness however productive  
is the great remote cause of these chronic affections, so  
that we may remove the disease, but till the strength  
and vigor of the circulation be restored we have no  
security against a return of it."

The expressed juice of the Dandelion has been  
given in the quantity of a gill or half pint a day  
with considerable success by some Physicians in this  
form of Hepatitis.

"To succeed in this disease, under any plan of  
treatment, the use of flannel next the skin, and an  
adherence to the antiphlogistic regimen is necessary.

"As a laxative and an alterative the long continued  
use of pills composed of Rhubarb and castile  
soap is highly recommended." (Colwell's Cat.)

The above are the most important observations  
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we have been able to collect on the nature and treatment of this complaint. I am aware that a great variety of diseases are produced by, and connected with this affection of the liver, but the extent of my knowledge, the limits of this paper, and the nature of my avocations at this time, positively forbid me, from describing them, which would require much time and occupy many volumes.

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